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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3689

UNCLAS HARARE 001019

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/IP/ITA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: HARARE: POLICE DISCONTINUE COVERAGE OF U.S. EMBASSY DUE TO OFFICERS' COMPLAINTS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Zimbabwean Republic Police (ZRP) have suspended police coverage of the U.S. Embassy due to complaints of working conditions by the assigned officers. Two (2) police posts have been vacated. ZRP coverage continues at USAID and the Public Affairs Annex. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In late October, RSO Harare communicated to ZRP Headquarters that the two (2) assigned police officers to the U.S. Embassy (Support Unit/Police Protection Unit) were periodically late, disappearing for 1-2 hours, and on one occasion left a loaded, automatic weapon unattended at their post.

¶3. (SBU) Approximately one (1) week later, ZRP mid-level supervisory officers requested a meeting with the RSO to discuss the complaint. In defense of their officers, the ZRP raised the issue of respect and unacceptable working conditions at the US Embassy. The specific complaint was that the assigned officers were forced to request permission to enter the compound via the Embassy's contract guard force and be escorted to/from the restroom. They also mentioned that the officers were not permitted to carry their weapons (AK-47 type) while entering the Embassy. RSO Harare addressed these various issues and in general terms explained our access control policies to all of our properties. RSO highlighted the security risks of having a weapon brought onto our compound, the rotating staffing of ZRP officers every 3-4 days, and the location of the bathroom being adjoining to the CAA building. RSO also mentioned that the ZRP officers raise these issues approximately every six months, and compare the access rules to the other Embassies in Harare that they cover. (RSO Note: Some Embassies allow unescorted access with weapons, other provide stipends or free meals.) The meeting concluded amicably, with the agreement that the ZRP would go back to headquarters and draft a request for a reasonable solution.

¶4. (SBU) Two weeks ago, RSO was advised by a low-ranking police sergeant that the ZRP Commissioner would be recalling police coverage. He claimed he could offer no more information and that we could call for specifics. The next morning, our FSNI was enroute to Police Headquarters and noted that both police posts were vacated (RSO NOTE: the ZRP only work day-shift at the Embassy).

¶5. (SBU) MGT Officer and RSO contacted and met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs soon afterwards, and were advised that the ZRP Commissioner had passed the same complaints to the MFA and asked that the MFA address the issues with the US Embassy. The MFA officer responded very positively and agreed that some of the ZRP allegations were unreasonable. He stated he would contact the ZRP leadership and discuss the situation and present our positions on access and security. He completely understood our rationale on bringing weapons into the Embassy, and the justification of having exterior postings for the only two (2) entrances to the Embassy.

¶6. (SBU) Today, two weeks later, the ZRP have not returned to the Embassy, although they continue to cover USAID and PAS without issue. This lack of support may be political in nature, or an attempt to obtain food or money by the ZRP.

¶7. (SBU) The Embassy has delivered a Diplomatic Note of protest and will continue to pursue this issue with the MFA.